

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A digital camera, comprising:

a motion picture recording unit which obtains a motion picture by continuously recording it, and a still picture recording/storage unit composed of a still picture recording unit which records a still picture by releasing a shutter and a picture storage unit which stores the still picture;

a compression unit which compresses the respective frames constituting the motion picture and provides compressed motion picture data in a predetermined operation mode;

an interface unit which outputs the compressed motion picture data in an appropriate format; and

a picture selection unit which permits a user to select a picture by any of the recording of a still picture by releasing the shutter and the designation of a picture stored in the picture storage unit,

wherein the compression unit comprises a selected picture output unit which provides, when the user selects a picture by the picture selection unit, the selected picture as it is without compressing it instead of the compressed motion picture data.

2. A digital camera according to claim 1, wherein the selected picture output unit comprises a still picture compression unit which compresses the selected picture at a still picture compression rate that is generally lower than the compression rate of the compression unit to thereby provide the selected picture by compressing it at the still picture compression rate instead of the compressed motion picture data.

3. A digital camera according to claim 1, wherein the compression unit which provides the compressed motion picture data comprises a picture reduction unit which thins out the pixels of the respective frames by a predetermined procedure.

4. A digital camera according to claim 2, wherein the selected picture output unit further comprises a gray scaling unit which gray scales color picture data and a unit which permits the user to select any of the still picture compression unit which compresses the selected picture and the gray scaling unit.

5. A digital camera according to claim 2, wherein the selected picture output unit further comprises a binarizing unit which binarizes picture data and a unit which permits

the user to select any of the still picture compression unit and the binarizing unit in the compression of the selected picture.

5 6. A digital camera according to claim 1, wherein the picture selection unit comprises the shutter, a release button of the shutter, and a motion picture selection unit which uses a picture recorded in relation to the manipulation of the release button manipulated by the user in the
10 predetermined operation mode as a selected picture.

7. A digital camera according to claim 1, wherein the picture selection unit comprises a unit which permits the user to select a still picture from the still pictures stored
15 in the picture storage unit.

8. A digital camera according to claim 7, further comprising an external storage device interface unit which permits data to be transmitted between a detachable external
20 storage device and the picture storage unit biaxially as well as the external storage device interface unit permits the external storage unit to be mounted and dismounted in the predetermined operation mode.

9. A digital camera according to claim 1, wherein the still picture recording unit and the motion picture selection unit comprise a unit which obtains the selected picture by combining two pictures recorded continuously in time.

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10. A digital camera according to claim 1, further comprising a selection button for permitting the user to designate the rate (which is referred to as the selected picture transmission rate) of the amount (which is referred to as the selected picture transmission amount) of the selected picture, which is transmitted during a still picture output period from the start of output of the selected picture to the end of output thereof to the total amount (which is referred to as the total transmission amount) of the selected picture and a motion picture which are output during the selected picture output period, wherein

the compression unit further comprises: a unit which outputs the selected picture and the compressed motion picture data by time-division multiplexing them so that a designated selected picture transmission rate is achieved when the user selects a picture by the picture selection unit at a time the selected picture transmission rate is designated to other than 100%.

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11. A digital camera according to claim 1, wherein the compression unit further comprises a multiplex unit which outputs, when the user selects a picture by the picture selection unit, the selected picture by time-division
5 multiplexing it and the compressed motion picture data as well as the multiplex unit comprises a unit which increases the transmission rate of the compressed motion picture data when the data amount of the selected picture is relatively small and decreases the transmission rate of the compressed
10 motion picture data when the data amount of the selected picture is relatively large.

12. A digital camera according to claim 1, further comprising:

15 a picture display unit which displays a picture;
a picture input unit which receives picture data from the outside;

a separation unit which separates a still picture (i.e., a selected picture) from the received picture data and stores
20 it in the picture storage unit, and an expansion unit which expands the picture data (i.e., a motion picture) having passed through the separator;

a unit which causes the user to designate which of the output from the compression unit and the received picture
25 data is to be displayed,

whereby the user can selectively observe picture data being transmitted and the received picture data.

13. A digital camera including audio input/storage unit
5 which inputs audio as audio data and stores it and a still picture recording/storage unit composed of a still picture recording unit which records a still picture by releasing a shutter and a picture storage unit which stores the still picture, wherein the digital camera, comprising:

10 an interface unit which outputs the audio data to the outside in an appropriate format in a predetermined operation mode;

a picture selection unit which permits a user to select a picture by any of the recording of a still picture by
15 releasing the shutter and the designation of a picture stored in the picture storage unit; and

a unit which outputs, when the user selects a picture by the picture selection unit, the selected picture to the outside in an appropriate format instead of the audio data.

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